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SERMON

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Preach'd before the $\frac{693.d}{12} /$

London-Clergy

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Saint A L P H A G E,

May the 17th. 1709.

R O M. XIII. i.

Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers.

By FRANCIS ATTERBURY, S.T.P.
Dean of Carlisle, and Chaplain in Ordinary to Her MAJESTY.

Translated from the Latin.

L O N D O N:

Printed for, and Sold by H. Hills in Black Fryars, 1710.

To my Worthy Brethren in Christ, the Reverend the Fellows of SION-College, and to the rest of the Clergy in and about LONDON.

Sirs,

THE Pious Design of the Founder of our Society, which He confirm'd by his Last Will and Testament, was to advance the Interest of the Christian Religion, and that Primitive Love and Unanimity which becomes the Professors of it, by the most effectual Means possible: namely, the frequent Assemblies, and joint Counsels of the Clergy. It was by the following Discourse that I endeavour'd to answer so good a Purpose, which You have brought to the desir'd Effect, by being Unanimous in your Approbation of my Sentiments in the Cause I undertook to defend from the Authority of Scripture; which was the Right of Princes over their Subjects. And this I was given to understand from an excellent Person, President at that time of our Society; who assur'd me, that what I deliver'd from the Pulpit, was not only what you approv'd of, but with one Consent desir'd might be made publick from the Press. It is impossible any thing could be more grateful to me than Your good Opinion of my Endeavours, which might make them serviceable both to Church and State; and therefore consequently Your Desire that they might be publish'd to the World, could not but be complied with.

You have therefore, Worthy Sirs, before You the desired Discourse, and that more compleat and extensive than that at first. For what is included between the 20th and 41st Pages, not being to be comprehended in an Hours Discourse, I thought fit to insert in this Publication. Which as confirm'd by Your Concurrence and Approbation, I offer to the Reader, as not at all doubting; but since what I have added is built on the same Foundation, and carried on upon the same Principles with that I first deliver'd, it will meet with the same favourable Acceptance.

God grant, that what I have offer'd to the publick View, may be of some Use to establish the Doctrines of the Apostle, defend the Dignity of Princes, preserve the Peace and Tranquillity of the Government; and lastly, put an End to those Disputes on this Subject of Obedience to Governours; which, tho' of all Duties made the most plain and obvious, to the great Scandal of our Religion, is more and more controverted among us.

To allay these Heats, my Brethren, nothing has been or can be more conducive than an Universal Zeal and Agreement amongst Your selves; and that especially when all Your Endeavours are countenanc'd and encourag'd by Your Diocesan, the Reverend the Lord Bishop of London. For which Reason 'twill be more convenient to Congratulate with, than Exhort You to this Duty. And this I beg leave to do in the Words of St. Ignatius, Τὸ πρὸς ἀξιοθέμενον ὑμῶν Πρεσβυτέρων, τῷ Θεῷ ἀξίον, ὥτως συνήμενοι τῷ Ἐπισκόπῳ, ὡς χορδαὶ καὶ ἀνὰ διὰ τῆς, ἐν τῇ ὁμονοίᾳ ὑμῶν, καὶ συμφέρῃ ἀγαπῇ Χριστὸς ἀείτῃ.

Now that ye may always continue in the same Opinion in Matters of Religion, thus consult the Truth of Christianity, and the Advancement of mutual Love and Charity, is the fervent Prayer of,

Worthy S I R S,

Your Fellow-Servant in Christ,

F. Atterbury.

R O M. XIII. 1.

Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers.

Reverend Sirs, and Brethren in Christ Jesus,

WE are here met together this Day, I to preach the Word of God, and You to hear it; which, it may be, would better become One of your Reverend Assembly to have preach'd, and me to have receiv'd. But as I was resolv'd by no means to decline this Province, appointed me by a most Pious and Excellent Person; so 'twas my Opinion I could not possibly discharge it better, than by discoursing upon the Duty of Subjects to their Prince, as it is described and delivered to us in Holy Writ. And indeed, I know of no Subject in Scripture more large and copious with respect to the Regulating the Manners of Men; no kind of Undertaking more pious and commendable in itself; no Discourse more acceptable, or better fitted to entertain a Christian Auditory, or promote the Happiness both of Church and State, than this seems to me to be: Especially in an Age, in which Opinions about restraining the Prerogatives of Princes, by coercive Methods, are become common among the People, and greedily embrac'd by unquiet, and ignorant Men: Insomuch that were St. Paul to revive in our Days, He'd have occasion with the same Zeal to contend for that now as a disputable Point, which He once enjoyn'd the Roman Converts as an unquestionable Duty, viz. *That every Soul should be subject to the Higher Powers.*

Nothing can be more plain, than that Subjection, Duty, and Allegiance to Princes, to pay Obedience to whatever they should justly enjoyn, and not offer Violence to their Authority, tho' what they commanded was unjust, were Doctrines (persuasive to a good Life) of the first Rank, and as such deliver'd to their Profelytes by the Doctors and Teachers of the Primitive Church: And that for various and weighty Reasons; drawn as well from the innate Value and Usefulness of such Doctrines, as a Judicious Fore-sight of those many impending Calamities, that by the Command, or Permission of the Magistrate, were like to befall the Professors of Christianity. And that Men might not make an Opposition to such Injuries, too violent and unbecoming their excellent Religion, Patience and Resignation were made Essential to their Duty, and as seasonable Barriers to Resentment and Revenge; by an Apostolical Authority enjoyn'd them.

Among the first Professors of the Christian Religion were many *Jews*, who openly declar'd 'twas their Opinion, that Heathen Magistrates had no Dominion over the People of God. Nay, such a false Notion had some of Evangelical Liberty, as to think themselves, by virtue of that, entirely free'd, and absolv'd from all Subjection to any Human Authority whatsoever.

It was therefore highly necessary to oppose these and such-like Errors, and with all imaginable Efforts strive to take off those unjust Aspersions fix'd on Christianity, from the frequent Tumults and Disorders, occasion'd by the first Propagation of it. I say, it was of the last Consequence to take off these Aspersions, and root out all Opinions, how preposterous soever in themselves, that might occasion them; lest in time they might be too strongly fix'd and imprinted in Men's Minds, even beyond the Possibility of erasing them.

Wherefore it is no great Wonder to see the Apostles so urgent, so intent in enjoyning this Duty; especially *St. Peter*, and *St. Paul*, who had been both of them in some respect Violaters of it. The latter in the Instance of the High-Priest (an Officer of the first Dignity under the *Romans*, in the Jewish Establishment) whom He irreverently reflected on, when publickly administering Justice to the People: The former in the Case of *Malchus*, Servant to a Magistrate of the same Dignity, whose Ear He cut off. And 'tis highly probable, that the Reason why these, who were the Chief of the Apostles, were so cautious, so earnest in their Writings about the Command of these Duties, was, that their Examples might not be brought into Precedents for others to act by; and that as they had been signal in their Offence, so they might be equally Eminent in deterring others from the like.

However this may be, 'tis certain they never enjoyn'd any of the Precepts belonging to this Duty without an Energy, and Ardour of Mind peculiar to them. *St. Paul* especially, when ever He treats of this Subject, is accompanied with a very sensible Vehemency and Earnestness of Spirit; *Let every Soul*, says He, *be subject to the Higher Powers*. Which Force and Passion of Expression He carries along to the eighth Verse of this Chapter, and delivers his whole Discourse to this purpose, with a just Confidence, and truly Apostolical Authority. *There is no Power*, He declares, *but of God: the Powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation. For Rulers are not a Terror to Good Works, but to the Evil. Wilt thou not then be afraid of the Power?*

Power? do that which is good and thou shalt have Praise of the same: for He is the Minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for He beareth not the Sword in vain; for He is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake. For this cause pay Tribute also: For they are God's Ministers, attending continually on this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour.

I. To observe some Method. In the farther Explication of this Doctrine, give me leave to make these Four Enquiries:

I. What these Higher Powers are to which we owe this Obedience enjoyned by the *Apostle*.

II. How far this Obedience reaches, or the Extent of the Magistrate's Authority,

III. The Reasons the *Apostle* urges for the Obligations to, and Necessity of this Duty.

IV. The Persons of whom this Obedience is required and expected.

It shall be my Endeavour to establish this Doctrine of *St. Paul*, contain'd under the foregoing Heads, chiefly from his own Authority; only adding what *St. Peter* has delivered on the same Subject, with a design, as some suppose (tho' I can't see the Necessity of such a Supposition to a sincere and unprejudic'd Mind) of illustrating and enforcing what might seem obscure, and hard to be understood in the above recited Quotations. I am sensible what a homely Dress I shall deliver my self in; the Subject I am to treat on being incapable of any Embellishments from Human Oratory. And therefore I shall think Eloquence enough bestow'd upon it, if I can but make it generally understood.

I. To advance then gradually towards a true sense of the Doctrine in the Text; 'twill be necessary first to observe, and prove that what is here said of the *Higher Powers*, is taken (according to the Language of the Schools) in the *Concrete*, and not the *Abstract*, and must be referr'd to the Persons, and not the Authority of Princes; *Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers*, viz. To those who are invested with a lawful and unquestionable Right to Sovereignty, that are here called the *Ministers of God for good*, and the *Revengers to execute wrath upon them that do evil*;

to whom also we are enjoyn'd by the *Apostle* to pay *Tribute*, and *Custom*, and *Honour*. These mutual Offices of Prince and People are so inseparately linked together in the Person of both, that the Offices and Persons to perform them cannot in any sense be considered a-part. And *St. Peter*, certainly the best and safest Interpreter of *St. Paul's* Words, is so plain and perspicuous in this Matter, that there is no possible room left to question his meaning: *Submit your selves*, says He, *to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governours, as unto them that are sent by Him, &c.*

Moreover, these Words of *St. Peter*, in another sense, do clearly Evidence *St. Paul's* meaning, should there yet remain any thing in it obscure and unintelligible. For they abundantly confirm, that the Obedience urg'd in the Text, ought not to be confin'd to the Supreme Magistrate, but extended to all that bear Rule under Him, to inferior Officers, his Vicegerents that execute his Commands, and represent his Person. 'Tis true, the Original Words ἡγεσία καὶ ἐξουσία signify a supreme and most exalted Power; and accordingly *St. Peter* applies the Verb ἐκφέρειν, and makes it peculiar to the Royal Dignity; βασιλεῖ ὡς ἐκφέρωνι, *to the King as Supreme, or excelling*. But since *St. Paul* uses the same Word elsewhere in a larger sense (as particularly where He exhorts Prayers shou'd be made, ὑπὲρ βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῆς ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ ὄντων, *For Kings, and for all that are in Authority*.) 'Tis plain that the Word ἐκφέρειν is of Universal Extent, as comprehending all sorts and degrees of the Magistracy. If therefore we consider the Words of *St. Paul* aright, either by themselves, or as explained by *St. Peter*, 'tis undoubtedly certain the Words ἐκφερόμεναι ἡγεσίαις, *to the Higher Powers*, are of general Extent, and by no means limited to the supreme Magistrate.

And if this is Truth, the Assertion of the *Apostle* about Obedience extends to Magistrates of an inferior Order; the just Inference seems to be, That he pleads for the Right and Authority of Princes, not only as God's Vicegerents, to whom the Care of making and enacting Laws does rightly belong, but also to whom a Power is given to see those Laws observed and executed. For tho' the Authority of these Higher Powers is in nothing more eminent, perhaps, than in framing just and wholesome Laws for the publick Good; yet the *Apostles* Precepts in the Text seem

to have little or no Reference to this part of the Magisterial Office, but rather point at the executing and commanding Powers; rather at those Magistrates, whose immediate Province it is to see that those wise and wholesome Laws be not infring'd; to keep Subjects loyal and unshaken in their Duty; to hold the Reins of Justice, and administer it impartially to the People; and lastly, to draw the Sword against all wicked and licentious Men, all Disturbers of the publick Peace and Tranquillity. And these are flat Demonstrations of an administering, rather than establishing Power in the Government; which *St. Peter* describes almost in the very Terms of *St. Paul*, viz. *Such a Power as is sent by God for the Punishment of Evil-doers, and for the Praise of them that do well.*

But 'twill yet more fully appear what Magistrates this Precept of the Apostle's enjoyns us to pay Obedience to, if we reflect what manner of Men those were that at that time bore Rule in *Rome*, and the neighbouring Nations. For as he directed his *Epistle* to the *Romans*, he must certainly mean *Roman* Magistrates, whose natural Subjects they were.

Now the Magistrates of those Times were generally Men of scandalous Lives, utterly averse to all Virtue, brought up in the Arts of Superstition and Idolatry from their very Infancy; and consequently not only furious Zealots for their own false Religion, but Enemies to the Christians, whom they sometimes persecuted, always derided and contemn'd. And yet 'tis to these very Magistrates *St. Paul* would have the *Romans* be subject, *not only for Wrath, but even for Conscience sake*; giving us herein a plain Caution, not to square our Allegiance to our Prince according to his personal Virtue or Religion, on the favour or dislike he may have for us. Indeed, the more gracious and condescending our Sovereign is to us, the more highly we esteem Him, and the more ready and cheerful we are in our Obedience to Him: But then these are Motives to our Esteem, and not our Duty; which however grateful or ungrateful to us, should always be preserv'd sacred and inviolable; and which every good Man measures not from the Pleasure or Advantage it brings him, but its innate Worth and Obligation.

II. Having explain'd who are meant by the *Higher Powers*, I come, *Secondly*, to consider, how far our Obedience to them reaches in the sense of *St. Paul*.

All the Branches of our Duty and Allegiance to Princes, are entirely comprehended within these two Injunctions. First, To perform all their just and reasonable Commands with a cheerful and

ready Mind. And, 2dly, if they enjoyn Things impious or unjust, yet in our very Refusal of complying with them, to pay all due Deference to their Authority; and if they prove any way prejudicial, or of ill consequence to us, patiently and submissively to bear the punishment they shall inflict upon us.

The first of these Duties (*Obedience*) he thus confirms: *Render*, says he, *to all their dues, Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour.* By the Words *Tribute* and *Custom* is understood, whatever is demanded from private Persons, to settle standing Funds for the Occasions of the Publick, for the necessary Use of the Government at Home; or the carrying on just Wars Abroad, for supporting and advancing the Dignity of the Crown, and Honour and Grandure of the Prince that wears it. In the Words *Fear* and *Honour*, is included that Homage and Obedience we owe our Governours, and which those Ministers for our Good, and Guardians of the Common-wealth, have a just Title to, when we pay all inward deference and respect to their Authority, and give publick Demonstration of it, by all the outward Marks of Duty and Affection: When we look upon them (Reigning by Divine Appointment) as the express Images and Representatives of the Deity; when by our continual Prayers, Wishes, Counsels, and Assistance, if requisite, we strive to promote their just and pious Endeavours; when we do not engage ourselves in searching too narrowly into Secrets of State, in Censuring the Errors and Mistakes of Government, probably by no Human Wisdom to be avoided; when we don't make it our Business to catch at and disperse the Rumours and Scandals of detracting; and lastly, when we consult nothing more than the Advancement of the Honour and Reputation of our Prince both at Home and Abroad, both in Publick and Private, with Parliament and People; and accordingly neither speak nor think any thing dishonourable of their Persons, or unbecoming the High Dignity they are invested with.

But, suppose Governours should behave themselves in such a manner, as to make it impossible for us either to love or esteem them; Imagine them to be neither Pious towards God, nor Just and Beneficent to Men; profligate themselves, and not restraining Vice in others: such as bestow all Honours and Places of Trust on the Unworthy, but despise, expose, nay persecute Good Men: then must we recur to that Christian Patience and Resignation prescribed in this latter part of our Duty, which will curb those Passions

sions and Resentments which would otherwise prevail over us. *For He that resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation.*

And yet we don't want some among us, that take a World of pains to weaken and undermine these inspired Dictates of the Apostle in the Text. And to this End rashly affirm, that the Obedience here prescrib'd is due only to those Governours that fully answer the End of their Commission, deriv'd originally from the People; and are a *Terrour not to good Works, but to the evil; Ministers of God for good, and Avengers to execute Wrath; attending upon this very thing*: But they who by their ill Government destroy the very End of their Institution, that wink at Vice, and discountenance Piety and Virtue, &c. have no Right to Subjection and Obedience from their Subjects. But certainly this is a sense that neither the Words will bear, nor the Apostle ever once dreamt of. For unless the Precept be referred to Evil Princes, the *Higher Powers* He there mentions cannot be thought to signify the Governour of *Rome* at that time. For whether 'twas *Caligula*, *Claudius*, or *Nero*, that, at that time, govern'd the Empire, neither of them can be rank'd among just and virtuous Princes. For which Reason, either the Apostle must refer himself to one of these, or it must be maintained, that the Obedience He enjoyn'd the *Roman* Christians had no Relation to the *Emperour* then reigning: a very absurd and irreconcilable Supposition! But should the words in the Text relate to Bad Princes, yet, say they, it does not follow our Obedience to them should be general and unlimited. And that this is their Opinion, is very plain; for if we owe entire Obedience to Good Princes only, there's consequently none due to the Bad. Horrid Doctrine! directly opposite to Primitive Truth and Apostolical Institution; but exactly fitted to their Inclinations, who would destroy all Government, and reduce every Thing to its first Chaos and Confusion. And yet we have those among us that deduce these very Principles (which how ever specious they may seem, are in reality down-right Rebellion) not as Consequences, but direct Inferences from the Apostle's Doctrine.

But these Men, sensible what a slippery and weak Foundation they have built their Opinions upon, strive to support and maintain them by a subterfuge of another make. They conjecture that *St. Paul* writ this Epistle just upon *Nero's* Accession to the Empire, before He committed such Cruelties on his Subjects, before He plotted

ted against the Lives, or had actually shed the Blood of the Christian Profelytes. But to what a short Compass of Time do they confine this Conjecture? For how just, how mild soever the Administration of *Nero* might be at first, 'tis plain the Tyrant appeared soon after : and to say this Epistle was penn'd in the mean time, is what may easily enough be affirmed, but not so easily believ'd. But suppose we grant the Certainty of this Conjecture, that the Christians suffer'd neither Death nor Banishment for the Faith, yet at that very Time they laboured under a World of Hardships and Inconveniences, and were the scorn and scandal of Mankind : Nor is it reasonable to suppose, the mildest Government in those Times, should take any great Care to secure them from these Sufferings, who were universally look'd upon as the Violaters of all Religion, and Enemies to the Worship and Service of the *Heathen* Gods. 'Tis rather probable, that with *Gallio*, they *cared for none of these Things*. And any Man that reads over the preceding Chapter, will not in the least doubt but this was the Condition the Christians at *Rome* were in at the very Writing of this Epistle. This the Apostle intimates from the 14 Verse to the End of that Chapter, where He tells the *Romans* ; *Bless them which persecute you : bless and curse not ; Recompence to no Man Evil for Evil ; and lastly, Be not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good*. To this Advice he immediately adds the Precept in the Text, which, no doubt, it was designed to open the Way for, and explain. Whether then we consider the State and Condition of the Christians at the Delivery of these Doctrines, even under the most mild Government, or the Scope and Connexion of the Apostles Discourse ; 'tis equally evident from both, that these *Higher Powers* there spoken of, and whom *St. Paul* enjoyns us not to Resist, whatever they were, either countenanced or connived at many Injuries offer'd the Christians then under their Government.

But let us grant for once, that the *Roman* Converts had as yet suffered no Calamity, no disturbance in the least from their Governours, yet 'tis certain they were even at that time not far from Persecution. For to be in continual Dangers, in continual Apprehensions of some impending Calamity, was an Inheritance entail'd, as 'twere on all the Primitive Christians. This our Saviour himself forewarn'd his Disciples of ; *They shall lay Hands on you, and persecute you, casting you out of the Synagogues, into Prisons ; and bringing you before Kings and Governours for my Name's sake*. Knew *St. Paul* nothing of this ? or had he forgot it when he delivered this Do-

Principle of the Right of Kings and Governours over their Subjects? From the Prophets, and his own Inspirations he had foretold how *the Holy Ghost witnessed in every City, saying, Bonds and Afflictions should abide Him.* Was he then so quick-sighted in discerning his own, and yet blind and insensible of other mens approaching Miseries? Had the great Apostle, on whom *the continual Care and Concern of all the Churches was laid*, no Thoughts, no Apprehensions of the Persecutions which then threatned the *Roman Church*? or if he had, is it credible, that writing to them of Persecution, he should neglect all Rules concerning their Behaviour in that Extremity, and divert his Discourse to some other End; *viz.* the giving Directions suitable only to Times of Peace and Tranquillity, which perhaps might prove altogether Useless in a Year or two after? Those who think *St. Paul* of this Opinion, how wise so ever they may seem in their own Eyes, detract, certainly, from his knowledge, whom they represent very negligent in enforcing the Performance of what was of the last Consequence; but beyond measure careful to inculcate such matters as are of little or no moment in themselves, and which Men naturally and freely embrace and practice.

For what Occasion is there to perswade Men to pay Tribute, to Honour, Obey, and be Loyal to those Princes, whose constant and greatest Study is the Good and Happiness of their Subjects? to acquiesce under that Government, from which we receive not the least Injury? or to be Subjects to those *Higher Powers*, who reign for no other End, than to be the unwearied Guardians of our Lives and Fortunes? 'Tis when these are at a Stake, when we have suffered innumerable Mischiefs by wicked Princes, and are like to be greater Sufferers still, that we have just Occasion for the Arguments, the Exhortations, the Commands of the Apostle to preserve us in our Duty, and keep down that Resistance which Rebellious Spirits are subject to. And this is the most useful and excellent Design of *St. Paul's* Discourse. They that think otherwise, that believe all the End He aim'd at was to restrain us from Disloyalty and Ingratitude to the best of Princes, seem to offer what's very foreign to the Intent, and highly unbecoming the Dignity of the Apostle.

There is but one Refuge left for 'em to fly to; And that is, to assert the Apostles Warmth and Earnestness, as he had reason, to enforce this Duty, was then necessary only to root out an Opinion of those Times, that there was no Obedience due from Christians to Heathen Magistrates.

But if we consider that this Error was peculiar only to the *Jews* and of them only the Sect call'd *Gaulonites* or *Galileans*: And that the *Roman Church*, to whom *St. Paul* directs his Epistle, consisted for the most part of *Pagan Professors*; it will plainly follow, the main stress of the Apostles Argument does not lye upon this Supposition, and therefore it can be term'd no other than a ridiculous Cavil, not worth the discussing any farther: especially when this Opinion and Doctrine of *St. Paul* is abundantly corroborated and confirmed by *St. Peter*, who gives his Suffrage in our Favour.

For in this manner does the Apostle exhort Subjects to the Duties of Obedience to Sovereigns: *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governours, as unto them that are sent by Him for the Punishment of evil-doers, and for the Praise of them that do well. Servants, be subject to your Masters with all Fear, not only to the good, but also to the froward.* And immediately following, as a common Motive and Argument to establish the Charge He had delivered both to the Subjects and Servants, He adds the Reason of his Injunction: *For this is thank-worthy, if a Man for Conscience toward God endure Grief, suffering wrongfully: For what Glory is it if when ye be buffeted for your Faults, ye shall suffer for it, ye take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently: this is acceptable with God.* Lastly, He gives them an Example of our Saviour's Patience and Resignation, commanding them entirely to practice by, and conform to it: *For even hereunto ye were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example that we should follow his Steps; Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatned not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously.* These things carry such a plainness of Demonstration with them, that 'twould be superfluous to say any thing more about them. *St. Peter* here peremptorily declares we ought to submit both to Masters and Governours, not only the good and gentle, but the froward also: i. e. Those that are cruel and inhumane to us, and whom 'twould be impossible for us not to oppose, did not the prospect of a Reward from God, and the Example of our blessed Saviour himself encourage us to depress those Swellings of the Mind, those Seeds of Anger and Revenge, such Inhumanity would raise in us.

They that affirm these Precepts of *St. Peter*, relate to Servants only, and not to Subjects, are guilty of a twofold Error: First, in dividing those things which, as they are deliver'd by the Apostle,

run on in an inseparable Coherence ; And, 2dly, in not duly considering the Reason and Intent of the Discourse it self. These Men, it seems, are of opinion, that St. Peter explaining first the Duty of the People to their Prince, and then that of Servants to Masters ; Towards the latter End of the Chapter, falls wholly upon laying down Motives and Arguments to persuade the Servant, and not Subject, of his Duty to his Superiors. But certainly it should seem to me of greater Consequence both to the Christian and Common Good, that Subjects be obedient to the Prince, than Servants to their Masters. We may conclude then, that what was of greatest Moment, that the Apostle referr'd to, provided his Words agree with it, which, 'tis plain, they are most applicable to. He writes this Epistle to the Sons of Bondage, the dispers'd *Jews* banish'd their native Country, and barbarously and servilely treated by the Governors of the Provinces they liv'd in, as is evident from many places of this first * Epistle. Now what could be more worthy the Apostolical Care and Authority, than to administer such Counsels, and enforce such Commands, as might be sufficient to buoy up their depressed Spirits, amidst so many and great Miseries ? This therefore is what He attempts with all possible Earnestness and Application ; recommends by the most agreeable and persuasive Arguments imaginable, and, above all, by setting before them the Example of Christ ; which certainly may be more justly applied to the deplorable state of Subjects, than Servants : For He himself did not suffer under a private Master, but the supreme Magistrate ; by whose express Command He was scourged and smitten, mocked and set at nought, and put to death. *He left therefore an Example, very useful for Subjects, that they should follow his steps.*

But let us grant these Words of St. Peter refer only to those subject to Domestick Authority ; yet certainly, if Obedience be due from a Servant to a Master, there is equal, nay much greater Reason it should be due from a Subject, to a Sovereign Prince ; and consequently ought to be the more inculcated. And the Reason of this will plainly appear, if we consider the necessary dependance of all subordinate Authority upon the Supreme ; that as long as the superior Power remains firm and establish'd, the Rule and Discipline of private Families, are secure from all Attempts to disturb or unsettle them. But when once the Supreme Authority declines, all such Institutions abate of their Sanction, and soon fall to the ground.

* See Chap I. ver 6, 7. II. 1, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. V. 8, 9.

We may then justly conclude this was the sense and meaning of *St. Peter*; That tho' the Magistrate be never so careless of his Duty, never so injurious and unjust in the Administration of it, yet We owe Him Respect and Obedience still. And since 'tis plain, he does no other than Comment upon, and, as 'twere, interpret *St. Paul's* sense on this Subject, (and therefore must be of his Opinion) we are to consider both as delivering the same Doctrines and Precepts to us: And hence conclude, when the Latter speaks of those *Higher Powers*, He comprehends as well Evil as Good Princes.

And let them who take such liberty of Interpretation, not only for their Entertainment, but out of Interest and Design: Let such, I say, remember, what *St. Peter* says in another place of those, who being *unlearned* and *unstable*, wrest those Passages in *St. Paul*, *hard to be understood, to their own Destruction*. For if He makes so severe a Remark on those that perverted the sense of what was indeed *hard to be understood*; what would He have said of such that strive with all the Art and Application they are Masters of, to misrepresent Things that are very plain, and need no Illustration?

III. *Thirdly*, The Reasons the Apostle urges for the Obligations to, and Necessity of this Duty.

And these are chiefly Two; One drawn from the Divine Right of Empire it self, that sacred Fountain from which all Royal Power and Authority flows: *For there is no Power but of God; the Powers that be are ordain'd of God*. The Other from both the publick and private advantage Government brings, as it is improved by the constant Care, Justice, and Integrity of the supreme Magistrate: *For He is the Minister of God to thee for good, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon Him that does evil*. From both which He draws this Conclusion; *And therefore ye must needs* (or 'tis absolutely necessary ye should) *be subject not only for wrath, but also for Conscience-sake*, *Ανασταν ἐν φόβῳ κυρίου*; not only from a Dread of any Human Punishment, but a Sense of the Divine Obligation laid upon us to perform this Duty.

The Enquiry our Saviour made of the Pharisees concerning the Baptism of *John*, may very well be referred here to the Original of Human Government; *Whence is it? From Heaven, or of Men?* There are that, without the least Hesitation, answer of *Men*, and produce a World of Arguments, very agreeable, they pretend, both to Nature and Reason to establish this Opinion. Amongst these, there are Two they seem most to rely on: Of which, One they very modestly expect should be granted them, and draw the Other from
weak

weak and invalid Arguments. What they take for granted, is, That there was a Time once, when Men lived without any Government; and thence they argue the Power of Life and Death was Originally in the People, and by them rightly transferred to the Magistrate. Of these, their Supposition I take to be wholly foreign to the present Subject, and their Inference can be maintain'd by no real Argument I know of.

Nor, since I am hastening to weightier Matters, have I any leisure, or think it worth while to prosecute these Objections any farther; especially when this One Expression of St. Paul's, *There is no Power but of God; the Powers that be, are ordained of God*, entirely confutes them. The Words in the Original are far more clear and significant than in the Translation, ὅτι ἡ ἐξουσία ἐστὶν ἐκ θεοῦ, αἱ δὲ ἰσχυρεῖς ἐξουσίαι ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι εἰσιν. And this is the Fountain, as I before observ'd, from whence the Apostle derives all lawful Authority and Government among Men, ὅτι ἡ ἐξουσία ἐστὶν ἐκ θεοῦ, εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ θεοῦ, *There is no Power but of God*; and the Persons invested with that Power are affirm'd, ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι, to have been *Ordained of God*: That is, as I understand it, not only instituted by God, but ordained to act immediately under Him, to represent the Person of the Deity, the Lord of the whole Earth, and execute his Authority in governing the World: for which Reason they are constantly term'd the *Ministers of God*, that reign indeed in their proper Dominions, not by Virtue of their own Power and Authority, but the Commission of God, the highest Power, to whom only they will be accountable for their Administration, whether good or bad.

And their deriving their Power immediately from God, is the Cause they are so frequently in Scripture honoured by his very Name; *For they are called Gods*, saith our Saviour, because *the Word of God came unto them*; in that they are chosen by Divine Appointment to preside over the People; they are, as'twere, Vice-roys of Heaven, and Dispensers of its Almighty Powers: *For there is no power but of God; the Powers that be, are ordained of God*; to wit, of that blessed and only Potentate, the King of King's, and Lord of Lords, who alone hath Immortality, as St. Paul expresses elsewhere: Which Words, as they serve to illustrate this Doctrine of the Divine Right of Princes, are well worth our farther Observation.

Here, then, the Apostle argues; God is the only Potentate, because only He is *Immortal*: And from Him consequently does originally arise that Power which distinguishes and raises Sovereigns
above

above their Subjects from Him, is that immortal Nature of Man by which He excels all other Earthly Creatures. Now Princes are Potentates in their respective Dominions, and humane Souls are immortal; but neither by Nature nor Acquisition; neither from the People, nor Traduction of Parents, but the Divine Will and Pleasure. GOD alone is the Fountain of all Power and Immortality, and all Communications of them to created Beings, flow entirely from thence: It is the People, sometimes, that set up Kings, and the Parents always that propagate Children; yet the Right of Princes can no more be attributed to the People, than the Creation of the immortal Soul to the Parent. For these are things derived from God alone, and dealt out by Him as He pleases; Who is the Source of all earthly Power, the only Author and Creator of immortal Souls.

This seems to be the true sense of these the Apostles Words, with which also the Writings of the Primitive Fathers do agree; *By whose command (viz. God's) Men are produced, and Kings established*, says the Commentator on *Irenæus*, lib. 3. cap. 24. And *Tertullian's* Notions, taken, 'tis probable, from *Irenæus*, are to the same purport. *Tertul. Apol. c. 30. From hence (viz. Heaven) came Empire, and hence Man before Empire; from hence is his Power and his Mind.*—

Indeed this Power we speak of is often conferred on Princes by Human Choice and Consent, and is not established always by the same Method, and in the same Form, but variously, according to the Wills and Dispositions of Men: the same is exercised by Men on their fellow-Creatures, and solely designed to promote Man's Happiness and Good. Princes therefore invested with this Authority, *St. Peter* very aptly terms ἀνθρωπίναις κλίσεσι, *Human Powers*: but if we reflect whence this their Authority comes, whose Vicegerents they are, and to whom they must at last be accountable for the discharge of their Duty, we must necessarily conclude with *St. Paul*, they are, οὕτως διατάχων, the very *Ordinance of God*.

These then are the sure Foundations on which the Rights of Magistrates are built and established, and from whence the Obligations to Allegiance do naturally arise. And since Princes are the *Ministers* of the supreme Deity, and have Divine Commission to rule over us, its highly reasonable We should pay them all possible Honour and Observance, out of a Reverence and Fear to God himself. *St. Peter* therefore, when He styles Kings and Governours ἀνθρωπίναις κλίσεσι, *Human Ordinances*; affirms withal, they must

Submitted to for *God's sake*; and if so, all the Affronts and Indignities offered them, all the Opposition made against them redounds to God himself, the great Establisher and Avenger of Royal Power—*For whosoever resisteth, resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they who resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation.*

' Yes say the Advocates of Popular Right; this holds true so long as Princes keep within the Limits of their Authority received from God, whilst they continue to do what is just and right: but if they go beyond that, they undoubtedly act contrarily to the Will of God, and cease to have any farther Power or Authority from Him. He then that resists such Princes as these in their wicked Enterprises, cannot be said to oppugn the Divine Will, or resist the Ordinance of God.

If this be true, I can't possibly see the Drift of the Apostles Discourse in the two first Verses of the Chapter. For what signifies his admonishing us to obey the *higher Powers* for that very Reason, because they came from and are ordained of God, if they have no Right to that Obedience any longer, than they, in every Thing consult, the Justice, the Interest, the Honour of the Commonwealth? For let the Right of such Governours be Divine or Human, let them represent the Person of God, or the People, what Man in his Senses will refuse to obey them? But that there is Obedience due even to unjust Princes, that such, tho' guilty of Male-Administration, yet as invested with a Divine Authority, have a Right to Honour and Respect: This is a Cause worthy the Patronage of the Apostle, and what we must maintain against all Opposition, to the utmost of our Power. All which St. Paul inters, when He says, *Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers; for there is no Power but of God, the Powers that be are ordained of God.* And what follows relates immediately to This—*Whoever Therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God, &c.* [*ὅστις ὁ ἀντιτάσσεται τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ, &c.*] to wit, that Ordinance which the Apostle would have us (*ὑποτάσσεται*) be in Subjection to. Here the Extreams answer exactly to the Antecedent Part of the Argument, and all are justly connected together, and tend to establish the same Principles, viz. that we should be subject to, and not resist our lawful Governours. But to what End could the Apostle use so many Arguments, be so urgent and powerful in his Exhortations to Us, if they respected such Princes only as were good and careful of their Trust, and whom we could not be disloyal to, without destroying the publick Peace, nay without the utmost Baseness and Ingratitude? These sure, who make their Commands not only our Duty, but our Happiness too; we cannot but in every thing obey both willingly and chearfully. Had the Apostle meant such, He would, no doubt, have told us so; but what He enjoins us, refers to Magistrates in general, whom we must be subject to, but not resist. To submit to good Magistrates is the least Part of our Duty, and what methinks should not need much Recommendation; but to obey the rigid and unjust is indeed a severe Injunction, and in which all Civil Obedience, rais'd even to its highest Pitch seems to consist. This is what St. Paul strives so nobly, with such Abundance, such Fervency of Spirit to convince us of. I could add a great many Observations more on this Head, but that having treated of it already on another Occasion, and I may have another opportunity to handle it again before I conclude; I think as much has been said, as is requisite to prove that St. Paul in his Precepts includes those *lawful Princes*, that yet act against *Law and Justice* in their Administration, and who, tho' appointed of God, do things

contrary to his Will. They who concede Sovereign Power to good Princes only, confound two Things together, very different in their own Natures ; To wit, the *Right* and *Power* of the Magistrate ; not observing the Distinction between what Princes do as agreeable to Justice, and what, as they have Dominion and Authority over their Subjects. That Princes should do what is in it self unjust, and act, at the same time, agreeably to the Laws of Justice, cannot be ; but yet it must be confessed their Authority remains in its full Force, even whilst they are acting thus unjustly ; still the Virtue of their Power remains sacred and unalterable ; and whatever they command, whether right or wrong, still carries such a *Vis* and Efficacy along with it, as to enforce the Subjects Compliance, or at least hinder his Opposition to it. For the Distinction betwixt the two Words, *Right* and *Authority*, is very obvious to any curious and impartial Enquirer ; the former is proper to the Actions, the latter to the Person of the Prince. The former is in all Cases referred to some Law or other that judges of what is just or unjust ; the latter is the only Cement that inseparably joyns the People to their Sovereign. And these indeed may be, and have been, abstracted from each other, not in Theory only, but in Practice also : as when certain Prerogatives are challenged by the Prince, as his *Right*, which yet He has no Power to exact Obedience to ; again, when He commands Things by Virtue of his Authority, not his *Right*, that plainly incroaches on the Privilege of the Subject. For the Régal Authority, as intended to preserve the *Right* of Princes, lays a very high Obligation on the Minds of Men ; and yet there is a Time, when that very *Authority*, separate from *Right*, remains Valid, and of full Force.

These things a little obscure perhaps in themselves, may be made more plain by a familiar Example. Judges that are commissioned to determine publick Causes and Disputes, are charged to act no farther than is warrantable, and agreeable to Law. Now if a Judge determine a Cause contrary to Law, his Sentence is certainly unjust, but not invalid at the same time : 'Tis true, he has exceeded the Bounds of his Commission, yet still acts by the Virtue of it. That indeed which is unjustly determined, is not, abstractly consider'd, of any Force or Efficacy it self, and yet the Authority of the Magistrate ratifies and confirms it. 'Tis certain the Supreme Power, whatever it is, under whose Cognizance the Matter comes, may set aside this Judgment ; but 'till that is done, it stands firmly fixed, altho' upheld neither by Law nor Justice. But if there is no Appeal made from this unjust Sentence (as may happen in Matters of no great Concern) tho' it be never so much against Law, shall it self pass into an Act, and be for ever in Force. Now if such Provisions as these, are of wise Use, to compose the little Differences of private Men ; certainly they may be far more nobly applied, to secure the Dignity of Crowned Heads, and the publick Peace and Tranquillity. And if the things enacted by a Magistrate of an inferior Rank, tho' contrary to Justice, stand established, shall the People be allowed, in the same Case, to oppose the Royal Majesty that sits on the Throne, and, upon Occasion, repel Force with Force ? Is it unlawful not to acquiesce in the Judgment of those Governours that derive their Authority from the Chief Magistrate ? and shall Disobedience offer'd to Him, whose Power is immediately from God, go unpunished ?

The two Reasons by which the Apostle fortifies this Doctrine of Obedience to Governours are, 1. Because their Constitution is Divine. 2. Because they are of the last Use and Importance both to the Publick in general, and every private

vate Member of it in particular. The former of these we have already dispatched, and now proceed to the latter. *But they that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation. For Princes are not a Terror unto good Works, but to the Evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have Praise of the same: For He is the Minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for He beareth not the Sword in vain: For He is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon Him that doeth Evil.* From the former Part of which Words the Apostle endeavours to make the Romans sensible, how much they would every one of them promote their particular Interest by paying Obedience to Magistrates; and then having discours'd very feelingly, but briefly on that Point; advances sensibly to treat more largely upon the End of Government taken in general, and as it respected the publick Good and Happiness: and this He recommends with great Ardour and Exactness.

They that resist, says He, *shall receive to themselves Damnation.* Οἱ ἀντισταῖτες ἐαυτοῖς κείμα χηλονται. They that resist bring Ruin on themselves, and shall receive the just Reward of their Wickedness. Now by the Word *Κείμα*, is meant not only those eternal Punishments God will sometime or other inflict on such Offenders; but also those temporal and finite Ones that they suffer in this Life. And that this Word is here taken in the same Sense, as in other Places of Scripture, in which 'tis very frequently made use of, * I think to be very plain from the Force and Connection of the Apostles Argument, *They that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation: FOR Princes are not a Terror to Good Works, but to the Evil, &c.* The Reason of this Judgment denounced He immediately subjoins, and then justifies and confirms it. And as this † Cause assigned comprehends in it temporal Punishments, so Damnation denounced in the Verse immediately preceding: yet so as not to exclude those Judgments of another World which after Death shall be inflicted on all Evil and Wicked-doers, whereof they are as so many Warnings in this. For 'tis very usual with Christ and his Apostles to represent the everlasting Miseries of another State, by those inflicted on Sinners in this; and tho' they may only verbally express the latter, yet 'tis plain they mean the former; in order so to impress them on the Mind both of Hearer, and Reader, as shall enforce a Belief and Expectation of them. And this is too well known to need any Proof or Example. For which Reason we persist in our former Opinion, that the Apostle denouncing [*Κείμα*] Damnation to rebellious Subjects, had an Eye to that [*Κείμα αἰώνιον*] eternal Punishment God will inflict on them in another World; tho' He more expressly insists on that Judgment which continually attends such Offenders even in this Life. And this I take to be the most easy and just Method to explain these Words of St. Paul—*They who resist shall receive to themselves Damnation; FOR Rulers are not a Terror to Good Works, but to the Evil.* But they who refer this to what went a good Way before [*viz. There is no Power but of God, &c.*] act very preposterously and unfair: for those things that are inseparably joyned together, they, without any Reason, divide, and contrarily joyn those that have no Relation to each

* See Luke xxiii. 40. xxiv. 20. 1 Cor. xi. 25, 34. 1 Pet. iv. 17. Rev. xviii. 20.

† The Particle [*γὰρ*] FOR is made use of seven times in the six first Verses of this Chapter, and always refers to the Words immediately preceding.

other; and this in Order, to reduce the Apostles two Arguments into One, and so weaken the Force and Authority of them both; or in other Words, by an unjust Exposition to restrain this Divine Right of Obedience to good and well-governing Princes, which are a *Terror not to Good Works, but to the Evil*. Which Opinion as I have, and will ever maintain, hath not the least shew of Probability to recommend it.

And I the more earnestly perswade my self, this is the Kind of Damnation the Apostle would render so formidable to the *Romans*, in that, all that follows is consonant and referable to it. He is speaking of the Civil Right of the Sword, and those Rewards and Punishments, which the Magistrate makes use of to incite Subjects to Virtue, or deter them from Vice. Which Things, since they all arise from what He had said before [*They who resist shall receive to Themselves Damnation*] ought to be, in some Sense at least, if not wholly, referred thereto.

This supposed; the Argument drawn thence by the Apostle, and from which He shews every one their particular Advantage in the present Concern, is this, That Magistrates are in nothing, and on no Pretence whatever to be resisted; no, tho' we injure our selves in the just Discharge of our Duty towards them. For since the Sword of Justice is put by God into their Hands, to execute Revenge on Offenders of all sorts, they will use it most severely, no doubt, on those who are Enemies and Disturbers of the State: Whatever Crime their Mercy and Lenity induces them to Pardon; they'll never let such daring Villiny, as strikes directly at their Authority, go unpunished. The very Profession of another Religion declares a Prince too great an Enemy to the Christian; but if those that incur such a Ones Hatred on this Account, invent any new Stratagems to promote Sedition in the Commonwealth; nay tho' under the very Colour of Religion they disturb the Peace, and act contrary to the Laws of it, they're worthy of just and condign Punishment. On the other Hand, there is nothing that induces Infidel-Princes more to Clemency and Good-Will towards Christians, than their modest and submissive Carriage to them; their honouring and respecting them next to God Himself. This is the way to avert those Dangers they may be exposed to. For wicked Princes don't often deal imperiously by Subjects of different Opinions, provided they keep them to themselves, create the Magistrate no Trouble, raise no Commotion against Him, but live peaceably in the Exercise of their Religion. This I say does not frequently happen, which St. Peter was very sensible of when arguing thus with the Christians in his Epistle, who had suffered many Injuries, and were like to undergo more—*Who is He that will harm you, if ye be Followers of that which is good?*

Thus much concerning St. Paul's Argument, drawn from the advantage Obedience brings to private Men; come we now to consider its Good to the Publick, and Usefulness of Government to Society in general. For this the Apostles Mind was chiefly fixed upon when He called Princes a *Terror not to Good Works, but to the Evil* and *Revengeurs to execute Wrath upon them that do Evil*.

It is in such-like Expressions as these, St. Paul renders the Reason why Kings were constituted, in what the Necessary, the Usefulness of Empire consists, what kind of Power that of Princes is, and how far extended, even to all the Uses and Advantages of Human Life. For these are the Conservators of the Publick Peace and Safety; These the Constitutors and Maintainers of those Laws, in the due Execution of which the Welfare of every Man consists. These are the

the Administrators of Right and Wrong, the Dispensers of Rewards and Punishments ; Punishments to restrain the Vices, and check the Presumption of the wicked ; Rewards to excite the good to Virtuous and noble Actions. Are they then such profitable Ministers for our good ? and is it not reasonable we should express our selves towards Them with all possible Gratitude and Thankfulness ? That we should love and revere them with our whole Hearts, and not stubbornly and ungratefully oppose them, who by their indefatigable Labour and Industry convey so many valuable Blessings to us. *For Princes are not a Terror to Good Works, but to the Evil, &c.* Of Necessity THEREFORE we must be Subject to them.

But the Enemies of Regal Power object, and confidently affirm, that St. Paul, when He enumerates all the Advantages it brings to every one under its Protection, did not propose thence to preach up Obedience to all Governours in general, but only such who perform the Trust reposed in them, and entirely confirm themselves to the Examples of just Empire and Authority. I think I have already abundantly demonstrated this Opinion to be directly opposite to the Sense of St. Paul, and an Invention of those who make it their Business to flatter the Licentiousness of the People. I'll add but one Word more concerning this, That either the Apostle drew this his Argument from the Office of Princes, whither good or bad, and from that Universal Use the Right of Empire is to the World ; or else from no one thing throughout his whole Discourse upon this Duty of Subjects to their Sovereign. Which Argument, since it tends highly to the establishing the Imperial Right ; we cannot think the Apostle would either neglect or purposely omit it. It was his Endeavour to search into every Thing, try all Methods that were likely to afford any Help towards the Establishment of the Supreme Authority. To this End it was very necessary to let Subjects know how much good they received at the Hands of even bad Princes, and how much the Publick was indebted even to those that were wanting in the discharge of their Office. Could St. Paul, think ye, forget this ? Or was He indifferent in the Favour of his own Cause ? Was this Disciple of Gamaliel, this great Apostle of the Gentiles, Dull-sighted now, who had so quick an Eye, and fertile Genius in the Discovery and Management of all other Things ? Or if He was sensible of the Use of this great Argument, can any Body believe He would have left it untouch'd and neglected ? And yet this must be their Thoughts that affirm what He says is only in reference to good Princes.

But, say they, St. Paul is not content to lay down Rules for our Obedience only ; but what is enjoy'd He maintains by Right REASON. First He adviseth us not to resist Princes, and then adds the Reason, *† FOR they are not a Terror to Good Works, but to the Evil.* It is therefore convenient we should measure the Force of the Precept by the Reason given as a Rule to direct us to the sense of it. And if we do this, the Apostles Precept must be restrain'd to good Princes, since the REASON on which it is founded belongs only to such. Cunningly argued, indeed, but very wide from the

† But granting this, yet there is a Superior Reason on which all Obligation to Obedience originally depends ; This before us our Adversaries grant is only drawn from the Consideration of our own good—Now to obey Princes because they do us good, is to obey them for our own Sakes. But St. Peter commands us to submit to every Ordinance of Man. Why ? not for our own, but the Lord's Sake.

Truth

Truth, as will appear not only from what has been said before, but what the same Apostle affirms in other places concerning the Ecclesiastical Powers, drawn parallel to the Civil Right of the Magistrate. For the Argument for both is alike, and in a manner the same. *Obey those that are set over you*, says St. Paul, *and be subject to them, as they that watch over you, and must render an Account for your Souls.* Here He gives the Reason why Obedience must be paid to the Rulers of the Church, but does not mean by this, 'tis due only to those set over us, that diligently and faithfully discharge their Ministerial Office. For without doubt we must obey those that live irregular Lives, and are remiss in their Duty, nay that wholly neglect it. For let their Conversation be never so vicious, and their Administration of Spiritual Affairs what it will, yet since they lawfully preside over us, what they enjoyn has a Force and Obligation annex'd to it that cannot be made void. This our Saviour teaches, when speaking of the Scribes and Pharisees, *They set*, says He, *in Moses Chair; Therefore whatever they command you do and observe: but do ye not like unto them, for they say and do not.* To these belonged the Right of interpreting the Law; therefore they, exerting this Right, must be obeyed, altho' they contradict what they command by their own Examples. And what if their Life is such as may be justly displeasing both to God and good Men, must their Authority cease for that Reason? And this will the better illustrate St. Paul's Argument for Obedience to the Rulers of the Church—*Be obedient to those that are set over you, &c. For they watch, &c.* It is their Duty to rule and guide Christ's Flock; this is the Province given them of God; but tho' they neither maintain nor adorn this high Trust with a Dignity suitable to it; yet does not that wholly deprive them of their Right to administer it; tho' their Administration be bad, yet their Call to it commands Honour and Respect. This the Apostle mentions more particularly in another Place—*We beseech you Brethren to know [or rather reverence] them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: and esteem them very highly in Love for their Works sake.* Καὶ ὑγιαίνει αὐτοὺς ὑπὲρ ἐν πειρασμῷ ἐν ἀγάπῃ διὰ τὸ ἔργον αὐτῶν. Now if the Word [ἔργον] Work both here and in * other Places of the New Testament signifie the Office, then the Apostles meaning is, That 'tis not only the Labours and Admonitions of the Clergy for our good, but their Office also that should endear them to us, and raise our high Value and Esteem of them. And tho' ἔργον should only simply denote the Work or Labour, not the Office of a Minister, yet in St. Paul's Sense, there is some Love and Reverence due to Spiritual Rulers, who don't take so much Pains in discharging their Duty; whereas they that are zealous and laborious must [ὑπὲρ ἐν πειρασμῷ] have the greatest share of our Affections and Esteem. But what answers best to the present Purpose, is St. Paul's Exhortation to Timothy—*Let the Elders that rule well [οἱ καλῶς προεστώτες] be counted worthy of double Honour.* There is then a Respect owing to those, as Rulers, that govern ill; but double Honour to them, καλῶς προεστώτες, that Rule well.

* 1 Tim. 3. 1. Εἰ τις ἐπισκοπῆς ὀρεγέται καλοῦ ἔργου ἐπιδομεῖ. *If a Man desireth the Office of a Bishop, He desired a good Work.* See also Acts 13. 2. 14. 26. Eph. 4. 12. Phil. 1. 22. Eph. 2. 30. 2 Tim. 2. 21. 4. 5.

Now what is here prescribed concerning the Duty of the Flock to their Spiritual Pastors, may be very justly applied to that of the Subject to the Civil Magistrate : and if so, nothing sure can be more foolish and absurd than the Comment some Interpreters put upon St. Paul's Discourse ; whence they pretend that He himself has given a reason to limit the Force of his own Precept ; and how when He had loudly proclaimed—*No Resistance* was to be made, on any Account, to the *Higher Powers*, should whisper, as 'twere, this Distinction in the Ears of the *Romans*— ' Provided they are such as religiously observe the Rules of Justice, and consult well the Happiness of their Subjects. Infamous Doctrine ! which whether most destructive of Scripture or the Authority of Princes ; whether most prejudicial to a Christian Church or the State, is hard to tell. Thus much is certain, Whosoever they are that favor such Interpretations, in Prejudice of a thing of such great Moment, as is Obedience to Princes, are direct Enemies to Both : Who whilst they are striving to debauch Subject's Minds with their pernicious Opinions, impiously pollute the pure Fountains of Divine and Eternal Truth. But of this enough.

Mean time, to compleat the Explanation of St. Paul's Doctrine, we must enquire briefly into the Reason, why 'tis the Subject's Interest not to resist Evil Magistrates. And that is, because the Advantages accruing to the Publick, even from a Male Administration, far out-weigh the Evils of it. They therefore that Sacrifice all these Privileges, in striving to avert lesser Injuries, cannot be in the Interest of the Government. Lawful Princes do not always act or command Things according to Justice and Law, but are found sometimes to encroach on the Right of the Subject ; yet private Men ought to bear these Injuries patiently, lest they fall into a greater Mischief than that they strove to prevent ; and do more Hurt to the Publick, than Good to themselves. Nay if a Prince should attempt what is very prejudicial, not only to this or that private Subject, but the whole State ; We must not run upon Extremities, must not draw the Sword to redress it : For this would be the Applying a Remedy far more fatal than the Disease it self. It would be more for common Good to submit to the cruellest Tyrant, than break out into open Rebellion, obey no Power, and put our last Refuge in Arms and Violence. For this is of all Conditions the worst and most miserable that can be imagined ; in which the Reins of Government being wrested out of the Princes Hands, his Laws subverted, and his Authority trodden under Foot, the Populace are at Liberty to run headlong on any Mischief, and act with Impunity whatever their lawless Extravagances prompt them to. 'Tis therefore of universal Benefit not to resist Evil Princes, lest the Rebellion prove of worse Consequence to the Publick than the unjust Administration it self.

IV. These with others, are the Grounds of the Apostles Reasonings with the *Romans*, and his urging them to Obedience ; which are of that weight and force, as to be adapted not only to any particular Orders of Men, to peculiar Times, or Constitutions of Government, but to all Christians in general, that have been, or shall be, in what Age, or of what Quality soever. Nay so plain and particular hath St. Paul been in this Point, as to leave no possible Excuse for any Subject, as such, to deviate from his Duty and Allegiance : That no Man upon any Change of Laws, or Alteration of Government ; That no exalted Subject, however rich, noble, or powerful He may be, should think Himself less obliged to pay Obedience than Another : Let *EVERY SOUL*, says He, be Subject to the *Higher Powers*. Any Man that lives a Subject under

the Jurisdiction of another, how great soever his Fortune, how high his Honour, how nearly advanc'd He may be to the Supreme Dignity (so he be but inferior to it) let him know, he is included within the Reach of this Precept, and has the very same Reason to obey with any other Man.

But it may be objected; Is this Precept of so universal an Extent, as to admit of no Restriction? Is there no regard to be had to human Circumstances? and no Bounds to be prescribed to our Obedience? Is this the only Form of Discipline we must not recede a Title from? What if Princes tear to Pieces that State they were designed to preserve? What if they pervert all Divine and Human Right? If they Sacrifice both the Lives and Fortunes of their Subjects to their Cruelty, and unjustly contrive to subject their Country to a foreign Power; Shall not the Subject oppose these Designs, restrain this Madness, avert these Mischiefs, this Destruction? They may, say some very pious and good Men, that have been very zealous and useful in defending the Right of Princes, and restraining popular and licentious Power. But how just their Sentiments are, I leave others to determine. As for my own part, there are many Obstacles that hinder me from prosecuting this Point any farther before you at this time, and insuperable Ones, to deter me from delivering my Thoughts when discoursing the People.

Certain it is, those that take upon them to interpret the Word of God, ought to fetch all their Arguments from the Rules of Scripture. Now 'tis usual for Divine Writers to be exact and zealous in their Precepts about the Performance of Duties, and not weaken the Force and Authority of them by Exceptions and Restraints. The Scripture is very particular in the Case before us, in deriving the Original of Human Power from God, and teaching, that it must not be violated by us. It enlarges much on the Topick of Respect and Obedience to Princes; but when, and upon what Provocations, we may detract from their Authority, and vindicate our Liberty, there's not one Syllable mentioned, except in the Case of Mens commanding what is contrary to the express Law of God. And how we must behave our selves at such a time, St. Peter informs us. *viz. that we must obey God rather than Men.* But in what other Respect that Tye of Obedience may be either slackned or dissolv'd, the Apostles are wholly silent. And so certainly ought we too, whose Duty it is to follow their steps in preaching the Gospel. These Things

(if there's any necessity for't) ought to be the Disputes of the learned in the Law and Politicks, and determined according to the Laws and Forms of Government, peculiar to every particular Nation. We may assure our selves nothing to this purpose can be gathered from Scripture ; which has given no Limits to this Duty, and therefore ought not to be made use of in the describing or desiring any. *Put the People in Mind* (saith St. Paul writing to *Titus*) *to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates*: but he no where tells him on what Occasions, and in what State of Things Men should not *be subject*, should not *obey* them.

Nor is there Occasion for any Man to prompt or advise the People to that, which they are naturally too studious about of themselves. Their Inclinations too much bent on Sedition, call rather for a Bridle to rein, than a Spur to quicken and provoke them. We are most of us naturally wonderful ingenious in the contriving Evasions to escape our Duty (making the Bounds we our selves have prescribed it, our Refuge and Excuse) and searching out Distinctions that may abate the Severity of the Christian Discipline. And this we never do with more Zeal and Application, than when we are enjoyn'd to an entire Obedience and Resignation to the Magistrate. Where's the Necessity then of our being taught by others, that which corrupt Nature teaches, and which without the Dictates of a Tutor we greedily imbibe? The subtile Disputes of some Moral Authors are highly worthy of Rebuke. For instead of deterring Men from Vice, they instruct them how far they may approach the Confines of Sin without incurring the Guilt. Nor are they in a less Fault who accurately dispute how far we may resist the Supreme Authority without committing Treason against it. This seems just methinks as if a Person harranguing an Army, should spend all his Thoughts in nice Enquiries on what Occasions they might desert their Colours, throw down their Arms, disobey Commanders, nay if there were a necessity, turn their Arms against them. Much the same, as if an Advocate of popular Liberty (dreading Mens Ignorance of the Concessions made them against Parents and Governours) should take up all the Arguments and Distinctions he could meet with to make 'em sensible when, and how they might cast off all the strict Obligations to Obedience. And tho' it should be possible the Design of these Disquisitions were harmless and sincere, and bore some Resemblance to the Truth ; yet would they be too offensive to pious Ears, too great Flatterers of Mens impure and

vicious Inclinations, even to bear a Dispute amongst learned Men, much less to be communicated to the unthinking Multitude, and explain'd in Discourses to the Publick.

But suppose it neither Unbecoming nor Unjust to do this; can any unprejudiced and sensible Person believe he may safely make *St. Paul's* Words an Handle for his Pretences? Search throughout the whole Scripture, and you shall find the Offices of Obedience to Magistrates, no where discussed with such Exactness, recommended with such Zeal, or back'd with so many powerful Arguments as in this Place. How malicious then, not to say absurd, are they, that take an Occasion hence, without any ground for it from the Apostles Words, to discourse freely of reducing Princes to Reason? that make this the most convenient Soil to produce Schemes for the pulling down Regal Authority and Power? I profess, 'tis with Regret of Conscience that I have ventured barely to mention in this Conclusion of my Discourse what may seem detracting from *St. Paul's* Doctrine, I had before been so particular in explaining: then how large a share of Guilt must they contract, who wholly omit what the Apostle has expressly and with great Fervency enjoyned concerning this Duty; but are over and above careful to invent ways how they may limit and restrain it? As much to the purpose, I think, as if any one about to expound this Advice of the same Apostle—*Servants, be obedient in all things to your Masters according to the Flesh—Children, obey your Parents in all things, For this is acceptable with God*—should make it his main Business to inform them how often they might be refractory, not only Carefully, but with Applause.

How great Authority of Military Discipline was, we may learn from the Centurion in the Gospel—I am, saith he, *a Man under Authority, having Souldiers under me: and I say unto this Man, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my Servant, Do this, and he doeth it.* Now suppose a Man making this the subject of his Discourse in a Camp, should draw thence no Consequences touching the religious Observance of their Military Oath, or the Duty owing their lawful Generals; and yet be very industrious to gather from it whatever might diminish the Right of Commanding, or the Necessity of Obeying: could such a One think he had in this Case acquitted himself well? Such refined Expositors of the Holy Scriptures as these, wrest and not explain the Sense of them; and as 'twere rack from them a Confession they never once expressed or designed. They scornfully reject

reject the genuin and original Meaning of the Text, and exact contrary Deductions and Inferences of their own.

The Consideration of the Times we live in, as well as the Doctrines both of the primitive and present established Church, could afford me many weighty Arguments to support the Cause in hand, But having already exceeded the limits of a Sermon, I must be very brief in running them over.

There is not one among all the Eminent Fathers of the Primitive Church to be met with, that feeds the Flock committed to his Charge with such poisonous Doctrines ; not one that puts Scriptures to so base a Use as the broaching Opinions among the People of defending their Privileges, and, on Occasion, using a coercive Power over Princes. Yet they lived in those Times when such Doctrines would have been very taking and acceptable : to wit, when Changes and Distractions in the Government were most frequent, and very bad Princes fill'd the Throne, even such whose Male-Administration challeng'd nothing but meer subjection to it.

Amongst the receiv'd Homilies of our Church, there are many that treat of this Subject, *Obedience to Princes* ; and some from these very Words of St. Paul in the Text. Abundance of Examples may be taken out of them that tend to restrain the People from Disobedience, but none that provoke them to it ; None that remind us to be careful of our Liberties, or how we are too excessive in Loyalty to our Prince.

I am sure, as the present State of Affairs are, nothing can be more unseasonable than the advancing such Disputes, and preaching up such Doctrines among us. We are zealous enough in defending and securing our Liberties, and are free from all Danger, but the valuing them too dear. Great Care must be taken we do not indulge our selves in our Liberty, till we become either pious Christians or good Subjects ; or else it will turn into Licentiousness, and so abrogate all Law ; bring every thing into Confusion, and at last perish by the Hands of that very Idol we our selves set up. St. Paul's Advice to the *Galatians*, and St. Peter's to the dispers'd Strangers throughout all *Asia*, &c. is every way as applicable to us. *Brethren, ye have been called unto Liberty ; only use not Liberty as an Occasion to the Flesh, but by Love serve one another— As free, and not using your Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness, but as the Servants of God.* These are Doctrines fit to entertain a Christian Auditory, fit Subjects to be handled by the Ministers of the Gospel ; this is what Men of our Sacred Profession ought to teach, and the

the present Times and Dispositions of Men call for, and what will be most pleasing to God, and, useful to Man, and as such, requires our constant and earnest Recommendation.

But they whose Delight it is, as 'twere, by a Spiritual Trumpet to sound Alarms; provoke vulgar Minds to Madness and Sedition, and add Fuel to the Flames already kindled, have great Reason to consider what they propose to themselves, by what Authority, and whose Examples they take this upon them : *For—Every One shall bear his own Burthen : But we have no such Custom, neither the Church of God.*

As I began this Discourse, so shall I end it (only a little more copiously) with the Words of St. Paul. For I think we who bear a Part in the Apostles Ministry, are very nearly concerned in his Advice to *Timothy* and *Titus*. And I could wish, my Beloved BRETHREN IN CHRIST, it might be deeply engraven upon the Hearts of every one of Us. To *Timothy* he speaks thus : *I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his Kingdom; Preach the Word, instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with Long suffering and Doctrine. For the Time will come (Nay, now is) when they will not endure sound Doctrine; but after their own Lust shall they heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears. And they shall turn away their Ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto Fables. But watch thou in all Things, endure Afflictions, do the Work of an Evangelist, make full Proof of thy Ministry. To Titus—These Things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all Authority. Let no Man despise thee. Put them in Mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates, to be ready to every good Work. That in thus doing we may establish the Kingdom of Christ; save our own Souls and them that hear us. May we grant even the blessed and only Potentate, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, to whom be Honour and Power to all Eternity. Amen.*

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with Us all evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.

Where may be had the Latin Sermon,